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COMMERCE DEPARTMENT PROPOSES NEW DOLPHIN-SAFE LOGO

The U.S. Commerce Department announced today a proposed rule to adopt an official dolphin-safe logo. The new logo may be used to identify tuna products from the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean only if no dolphins were killed or seriously injured during a set in which tuna were caught. The Department's National Marine Fisheries Service is mandated under the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act to develop its own logo.

"The new Department of Commerce logo assures the public that no dolphins were injured or killed during a set in which tuna were harvested and that the tuna they consume meets internationally adopted protection measures," said Penny Dalton, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The Commerce Department will use the new dolphin-safe logo in conjunction with the United States' tuna tacking program. The new tracking program would track tuna caught by purse seine vessels in the eastern tropical Pacific from capture to final sale. The specific requirements of the new tuna tracking program will be outlined in an interim final rule that is expected to be published by the end of this year.

The Fisheries Service will solicit comments for two weeks on the proposed rule. Written comments on the proposed regulations should be submitted by Jan. 5, 2000, and be addressed to: Christopher Fanning, NMFS, Southwest Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: To see the proposed new logo and a fact sheet, please visit our Web site at: http://www.nmfs.gov/prot_res/main/tunadolpin.html